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Joint Inspection Unit

Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the Secretary-General**

In accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 56/245 of 24 December 2001, the Secretary-General transmits herewith to the General Assembly the preliminary listing of potential reports for the programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2003 and beyond (see annex).

* A/57/150.

** Owing to the need for preliminary consultations, it was not possible to meet the 2 July 2002 deadline for submission.

02-53229 (E) 130902

Annex

Preliminary listing of potential reports for the programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2003 and beyond

Introduction

1. The following listing of potential reports for the programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) for 2003 and beyond has been drawn up in response to paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 56/245 of 24 December 2001, by which, in particular, the Assembly invited the Unit to improve the presentation of the listing of potential reports for the following year and beyond by providing information on the source, including legislative basis, objectives, problems to be addressed, duration and expected date of completion, and to present such information before the final quarter of each year. The listing is subject to change: new reports may be added; planned reports may be modified, postponed or cancelled when circumstances so warrant; and titles may be changed to reflect the new thrust of reports.

2. The Unit has included in the preliminary listing proposals for 10 new reports on subjects for inspection, evaluation and/or investigation in the areas of administration and management, operational programme activities and humanitarian assistance. The duration of the preparation of each potential report may vary from 6 to 12 months, depending on its scope and complexity, on the basis of current internal yardsticks. The time frame may also be influenced by external dependencies, inter alia, the timeliness of required input from the secretariats of participating organizations. If included in the work programme for 2003, reports would, in principle, be initiated during the course of 2003 and be presented, in most cases, to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth or fifty-ninth sessions.

3. The Unit would highly appreciate receiving, by end-November 2002, any comments on the preliminary listing from Member States, the legislative organs and/or the executive heads of the participating organizations, as well as the bodies of the United Nations system concerned with budgetary control, investigation, coordination and evaluation.

A. Effective arrangements and mechanisms to ensure interdisciplinary approaches to the formulation and implementation of programmes and activities

4. Most organizations and programmes in the United Nations system have organizational structures based on disciplinary lines. With the gradual adoption of strategic planning and results-based budgeting principles, there is an increasing emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach, where required, in addressing recognized challenges and in the design of substantive programmes and activities. However, this poses a formidable array of practical and administrative problems. The Unit has therefore included, following a suggestion by the secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, a comparative review of the various experiments that have been attempted in the past or are currently being considered by various organizations with a view to identifying lessons and best practice in this area.

B. Role of the United Nations system in disaster reduction and response

5. The role of the United Nations system in disaster reduction and response has been included in the preliminary listing, based on a suggestion by the secretariat of the World Health Organization (WHO) for a report on the role of WHO in disaster reduction and response, following external evaluations and management reviews of recent emergency operations (e.g. Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor) involving WHO. Given that disaster reduction and response require an interdisciplinary approach backed by improved coordination among participating organizations, JIU decided to expand the scope of the report to cover all relevant organizations of the United Nations system. Such a study would allow for the comparative review of administrative procedures in entities within the system with a view to contributing to the progressive standardization of management approaches in

humanitarian-related activities. The legislative basis for this study lies in General Assembly resolution 56/195 of 21 December 2001, on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

C. Cooperation of the United Nations system with multilateral financial institutions

6. In 1992, JIU explored various areas and mechanisms for cooperation and coordination between organizations of the United Nations system and the multilateral financial institutions, notably the Bretton Woods institutions (see E/1993/18 and Add.1). The report noted in particular that cooperation and coordination between the two groups of organizations could be further enhanced in areas perceived to offer mutual advantages, for example, combining the strengths of the United Nations agencies in development cooperation with the financial resource capabilities of the financial institutions.

7. In recent years, there has been growing emphasis on the need to enhance cooperation and coordination within the international development community in support of the outcome of the major global conferences. The United Nations Millennium Declaration laid down broad goals, the attainment of which requires concerted efforts by the organizations of the United Nations system, the financial institutions and the bilateral donors. With this in mind, the Unit found it timely to revisit its previous report on the subject and, accordingly, at the suggestion of the World Bank, the Unit decided to include this topic in its preliminary listing for 2003 and beyond.

D. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: review of institutional and programme issues

8. In a previous report (see A/51/152), JIU assessed the results of the internal reforms undertaken by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the 1980s and early 1990s in order to strengthen its global mandate and relevance in the area of trade and development issues, especially following the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

9. The report found that the mandates of UNCTAD and WTO were complementary in that UNCTAD approached trade issues from a holistic and development perspective, combining policy analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation, whereas the WTO mandate was more legal and rules-based.

10. This topic has been included in the preliminary listing at the suggestion of the World Bank. It would seem useful to look once again at the central issues dealt with by the Unit, as a follow-up to the above-mentioned report.

E. Harmonization of administrative practices and entitlements for staff of the United Nations system serving at field duty stations

11. A review of administrative practices and entitlements for staff serving at field duty stations has been included in the preliminary listing upon a suggestion made by the United Nations Secretariat (specifically, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). The Unit would review possible discrepancies in the terms and conditions of service, entitlements and compensation packages of United Nations staff serving in the field and those of other United Nations operational agencies. Currently, it appears that administrative differences exist among the common system organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the United Nations Secretariat. These potential discrepancies relate to such aspects as assigned duty station, rest and recuperation entitlements for staff serving in hardship duty stations and compensation packages. Such a review would take into account the terms and conditions of United Nations staff, as established by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the International Civil Service Commission.

F. Information technology assets, their utility and effectiveness in the United Nations Secretariat

12. The proliferation of information technology systems is a general phenomenon in the United Nations system. At the United Nations Secretariat, investment

decisions for information technology systems were decentralized to departments and offices, pursuant to a budget instruction dated 23 October 1998. In February 2001, the General Assembly decided on a plan of action for information technology in the Secretariat and an information technology strategy for the Secretariat was finalized and set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/780). This study, which has been suggested by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, would include a review of whether an accurate inventory of information technology assets (including their financial value) exists centrally in the Secretariat and whether this information is being used for further investment decisions. It could also review the impact of the Information and Communications Technology Board after one year of operation.

G. Human resources management in the United Nations system (a series of reports)

13. An earlier suggestion by the secretariat of WHO that the Unit include in its work programme a review of human resources management in the organizations of the United Nations system is the origin of this planned series of reports. Building on the Framework for Human Resources Management[1] which the International Civil Service Commission had presented to the General Assembly in 2000, WHO proposed a comparative analysis of human resources management to identify those areas in which further reform was necessary and assess whether there existed significant discrepancies that could affect the common system.

14. Since such an undertaking would be too broad in scope, the Unit decided to take a step-by-step approach and, in the first instance, to review the question of post structures and the types of appointments used by the various organizations of the system. Subsequent reports will address the issues of delegation of authority in human resources management, performance appraisal systems and accountability and oversight in human resources management.

15. In preparing these reports, the Unit will first take stock of the current situation and of current initiatives being taken by various organizations to improve their practices, and will make recommendations aimed at harmonizing criteria and achieving greater coordination among organizations, taking into account their specific mission objectives, mandates and features.

H. Voluntary contributions from Member States

16. In the context of the regular interaction between the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and JIU, the issue related to a practice of donors attaching at times conditions to voluntary contributions and its impact on the programmes and activities of United Nations organizations, in particular the core programmes, was raised in 1998. Subsequently, at the end of 2001, the United Nations Environment Programme suggested that an assessment of the tendency towards earmarked contributions as part of voluntary contributions to United Nations organizations and programmes be included in the work programme of the Unit. This suggestion was supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in its comments on the potential listing of reports for 2002. The International Civil Aviation Organization recently submitted in addition a suggestion that JIU study voluntary contributions from States for regular programme activities. In view of these suggestions, JIU has included this topic in its preliminary listing.

17. The objective of the study will be to assess the manner, methods and procedures followed in raising voluntary contributions, their level, including earmarked contributions, in relation to regular funding in various United Nations organizations, and their impact on the programmes and activities of these organizations. Issues to be reviewed in this context include: the funding structure in United Nations organizations; resource mobilization strategies and policies pursued by the organizations; predictability of resources received through voluntary contributions; and the extent to which earmarked contributions support or distort core programme activities.

I. Planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation in the United Nations system: status of implementation of results-based management

18. A number of organizations of the United Nations system have initiated results-oriented reform processes with a view to improving their planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation systems in order to cope more adequately with requirements for efficiency and accountability.

19. The planned review of such systems, which should be based on systematic consideration of the cycle as a whole, will focus on the results-oriented approach, identifying the impact of its application to the whole cycle. The report will suggest ways to improve, within the framework, the current methodologies for planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of the organizations of the United Nations system with a view to assisting Member States and the organizations themselves in designing and reviewing results-based management systems as an effective managerial tool. The impact of the zero growth policies (real and nominal) and other resource constraints on the implementation of results-based management will also be covered in this review.

20. This item was originally included in the programme of work of JIU for 2000, at the suggestion of the secretariats of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the International Maritime Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, but was postponed pending the Secretary-General's pertinent report on results-based budgeting.

J. Procurement practices in the United Nations

21. The item on procurement practices in the United Nations has been included in the preliminary listing, based on the suggestions made by the secretariat of the World Food Programme to review procurement practices in the United Nations system, and by the secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations that a system-wide review of electronic-procurement (e-procurement) be undertaken.

22. The review is designed to act as a catalyst to encourage greater coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system in the liaison and sharing of procurement information, with the aim of achieving the greatest possible efficiency and cost-effectiveness in procurement transactions. The review will cover policies and procedures adopted by the various organizations in the procurement of goods and services, and the coordination mechanisms that exist for the sharing of procurement information, including rosters of suppliers and blacklisted suppliers.

23. The review will also emphasize the status of e-procurement in the system, examining the potential benefits to be derived from a wider use of this facility and the merits of adopting a uniform approach. Areas related to procurement activities that could benefit from a wider and faster sharing of electronic-supported practices will be identified, and proposals will be put forward for innovative, information and communication technology-driven procurement procedures.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 30* (A/55/30), annex II.

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Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 56/270 of 27 March 2002, requested the Secretary-General to report on an annual basis on progress made in the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa.

This first report provides the required progress information and an update on the actions taken with regard to the views and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as contained in paragraphs 4, 5 and 8 of its report dated 14 December 2001 (A/56/711). The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report.

* A/57/150.

** The present report was delayed owing to the need to ensure consultations with the Commission secretariat were completed.

02-53217 (E) 120902

I. Introduction

1. In his report dated 3 December 2001 (A/56/672), the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly of the need for additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

2. In its report dated 14 December 2001 (A/56/711), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommended that the General Assembly authorize the proposed construction and approve an appropriation in the amount of $7,711,800 for that purpose.

3. In its resolution 56/270 of 27 March 2002, the General Assembly approved the proposed funding within the available balance of the construction-in-progress account and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly on an annual basis on the progress made in that regard.

II. Review of the recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/56/711)

4. In paragraph 4 of its report (A/56/711), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions requested that a re-examination be made of the use of the proposed additional space to maximize office space and minimize common and temporary space, taking into account existing standards. Accordingly, the Request for Proposal for Architectural and Engineering Services specifies that the design should result in a more rational and efficient layout of space with optimal construction costs and sufficient swing space provisions, utilizing the "open office space" concept, without compromising quality or functionality requirements.

5. The Advisory Committee's recommendation that ECA consider the possibility of leasing any unoccupied office space during the initial period to suitable outside entities is being pursued and seems achievable, considering the current trend of office use in Addis Ababa.

III. Status and development of the project

6. An agreement with the host country has been successfully negotiated and finalized. This agreement includes, among other things, the following provisions:

- Tax exemption for construction materials
- Multiple re-entry visas without charge to the United Nations
- Assistance in the provision of required utilities.

7. A schedule of design consultancy and construction activities with milestone dates has been developed and is summarized below:

(a) Preparation, mobilization, bidding and identification of consultants to be completed by 4 November 2002;

(b) Design, bidding and identification of the contractor — to take place from 4 November 2002 to 12 February 2004;

(c) Construction phase — to take place from 13 February 2004 to 30 December 2005;

(d) Closing of the project, occupation of the building and warranty period — to take place from 2 January 2006 to 1 January 2007.

A year-to-year cost plan summary in this regard is presented in the annex to the present report.

8. Administrative and coordination arrangements, outlining general project management policy as well as budgetary and financial management policy, including organizational guidelines, have also been developed.

9. An architect was hired as a consultant to assist in the preparation of various documents which are critically important within the framework of the project. Two of these documents, "Request for Proposal" and "Outline Design Brief", which are the foundation of the whole process, have been completed and submitted to the Procurement Division. The "Request for Proposal" explains all requirements, procedures and applicable regulations and includes a draft of the future contract between the parties. The "Outline Design Brief" outlines and details the expectations regarding the design of the structure. Both documents are mandatory to allow prospective bidders/proposers to prepare their proposals for evaluation and selection by the United Nations.

IV. Conclusion

10. Activities for construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa are progressing as per the schedule in paragraph 7 above, in keeping with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The General Assembly may wish to take note of the present report.

Annex

Construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa

Cost plan

No.	Description	Planned expenditures per year (in United States dollars)						Total cost (in United States dollars)
		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
1	Construction cost for a 6,700 m^2 structure at \$650/m^2, including warranty costs			1 188 150	2 772 350	220 000	220 000	4 400 500
2	Design cost plan and consultancy services	66 000	96 480	131 000	150 000	8 083		451 563
3	Site works, utilities connection, technology backbone, LAN/WAN, enhanced security, fire safety, back-up power etc. at \$150/m^2			150 000	763 950	50 775	50 775	1 015 500
4	Workstations, furniture, office automation equipment etc. for 73 staff at \$3,600/staff on average					262 800		262 800
5	Project coordination, supervision and management (the Project Coordination Unit at ECA)	33 675	110 000	165 000	174 525	25 000		508 200
6	Contingencies		30 512	155 000	400 625	55 000	10 000	651 137
7	Provision for inflationary increases and currency fluctuation		52 000	150 000	205 100	15 000		422 100
	Total	**99 675**	**288 992**	**1 939 150**	**4 466 550**	**636 658**	**280 775**	**7 711 800**